

State of Alaska
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
Southern Southeast Area Coastal Region

Forest Land Use Plan, Final Decision, and Alaska Coastal Management Program Consistency Determination

for the

Bostwick #1 Timber Sale

Spring 2005



I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

The purpose of this Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) is to provide sufficient information for reviewers to ensure that the best interest of the State will be served by this proposed timber sale. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Forestry (DOF), Coastal Region is offering an estimated 12,870 thousand board feet (MBF) of merchantable timber in the Bostwick #1 Timber Sale. This timber sale is comprised of nine units with a total acreage of four hundred ninety-five (495) acres. This sale will be sold under provisions of AS 38.05.123: Negotiated timber sales for local manufacture of wood products. The sale will require in-state manufacture of high value-added wood products and will be negotiated with Pacific Log and Lumber located in Ketchikan, Alaska. AS 38.05.123 requires that the DOF negotiate a timber sale with just one operator, as an alternative to the sealed bid process. By law, we can not impose manufacturing requirements on sealed bid sales. Exporting of round logs is allowable with a sealed bid sale.

The Division of Forestry will negotiate this timber sale with Pacific Log & Lumber, because it is the only mid-sized mill in Southern Southeast Alaska that has the manufacturing capability to produce high value-added wood products. There are only a few small mills in Southeast Alaska that can produce high value-added products, and they do not have the financial ability to log a timber sale of this size. We also sell small sales under AS 38.05.123 that are better suited and more conveniently located for those small operators.

The total estimated sawlog volume for the sale consists of 6,500 MBF of western hemlock saw logs; 2,100 MBF of Sitka spruce saw logs; 1,900 MBF of western red cedar saw logs; and 310 MBF of Alaska yellow cedar. Another 2,060 MBF of mixed species cull utility logs are estimated to be in the units. The contract will require 100 percent in-state manufacture of all marketable sawlogs. Approximately 9.1 miles of new road will be constructed for this sale. The contract period will be for thirty-six months (three years).

B. Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) Consistency

The Preliminary Decision/Forest Land Use Plan was distributed to state agencies, local organizations, the public libraries in Craig, Ketchikan, Wrangell, and Petersburg, and requesting public from our mailing list on March 14, 2005. Notice appeared in the Anchorage Daily News, the Ketchikan Daily News, the Island News, The Petersburg Pilot, and the Wrangell Sentinel during the first week of review. No comments were received from eligible review participants that contested the State's consistency statement. We did receive comments from the Organized Village of Saxman challenging DOF's proposed consistency statement. Although Saxman is not a review participant as defined in AS 46.40.096, DOF considered their comments before making the Proposed Consistency Determination. See Section VII of this document, the ACMP consistency analysis, for our review and analysis of the comments we received on our consistency statement.

C. Five-Year Sale Schedule

The sale was shown as a sale area within the previous Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales (FYSTS) for the SSE Area, Calendar Year 2005 as required by AS 38.05.113.

D. Location

This timber sale is located on Gravina Island, approximately five miles west of the community of Ketchikan, Alaska (see timber sale area map). Ketchikan is located on the west side of Revillagigedo Island. The timber sale area is legally defined as occupying portions of Sections 21, 28 and 33, T75S, R90E; and Sections 4, 5, 6, and 8, T76S, R90E, Copper River Meridian. This timber sale occurs in a portion of a block of state timber identified as K-41 in the DNR's Central/Southern Southeast Area Plan. The total acreage for tract K-41 is 4,975 acres. The proposed harvest acreage for this sale (495 acres) comprises only ten percent of the total tract acreage. Access to the sale area will be by a newly constructed road that will tie in to the Gravina Island road system.

Chapter 2 of the Central/Southern Southeast Area Plan states that "Harvest units may not exceed 160 acres in size unless approved in a FLUP after consultation with DEC and ADF&G, and public review." The timber harvest units for the Bostwick #1 Timber Sale are significantly smaller than 160 acres, except for Unit 10 (Table 1). This FLUP process serves as the required consultation and public review.

Table 1. Size (in acres) of each timber harvest unit.

Unit	Acres
1	2
2	14
3	30
4	16
5	0 (unit dropped)
6	7
7	9
8	5
9	70
10	342
Total	495

The adjacent landowner is the United States Forest Service (USFS). The regional Native corporation is Sealaska Corporation. The nearest village corporation is Cape Fox, located in the community of Saxman five miles south of Ketchikan. The village of Metlakatla on Annette Island is approximately 13 miles to the southeast of the timber sale. Other local Native entities are the Saxman Tribal Council, Tongass Tribe, Ketchikan Indian Council, and the Metlakatla Indian Community.

E. Title, Classification, and Other Active or Pending Interests

DNR's Central/Southern Southeast Area Plan (CSEAP), adopted in November of 2000, classifies state land on Gravina Island. The area plan is the first step in the state's public planning process to determine what activities are allowed on specific units of state land. The area plan was adopted after changes to the guidelines were made to the plan based on input from agencies, organizations, and the local community, including public meetings and a public comment period. By law, State forest land must provide for multiple uses [AS 41.17.060 and 38.04.065].

The unit that contains the Bostwick #1 Timber Sale (Unit K-41) is co-designated Gu (General Use)

and Hv (Harvest). “General Use” is used to designate land that has many resource values, none of which is sufficiently high value to merit designation as a primary use, or, because of the size of the parcel, a variety of uses can be accommodated with appropriate siting and design considerations. “Harvest” is used for areas important for subsistence, recreational, and/or community harvest of fish and wildlife, where alteration of habitat could permanently limit sustained yield to traditional users, or where the level of fish and wildlife harvest has or is projected to reach the harvestable surplus for the resource.

According to the area plan, where units have more than one designated use (as in Unit K-41), DNR will “avoid or minimize conflicts between designated uses by applying the management intent statement and guidelines for the unit, the regional intent, and the Chapter 2 guidelines from the area plan together with existing statutes, regulations, and procedures.” The specific management intent for parcel K-41 is to manage it “for multiple uses, including dispersed recreation and both current and future forest values. Projects may include timber sales, pre-commercial thinning to improve forest productivity and wildlife habitat, and pruning to improve wood quality.” The parcel description notes opportunities for timber sales designed for high value-added manufacturing. The Bostwick #1 Timber Sale is consistent with the area plan’s classification and management intent for Unit K-41. (See also the “Wildlife habitat” section later in this plan.)

F. Objectives

1. To follow the DNR’s constitutional mandate to encourage the development of the State’s renewable resources, making them available for maximum use consistent with the public interest. Sustain and promote a healthy, long-term timber industry in the State, through providing a secure source of timber for harvest that produces raw materials (logs) for local manufacturing plants (e.g., mills) while protecting other resources such as fish and wildlife.
2. To help the State’s economy by supporting local jobs that generate wages, purchases, and business, and to provide timber sale receipts to the State.
3. To help the local economy of the community of Ketchikan and other communities in Southern Southeast Alaska.
4. To improve forest growth and vigor by harvesting and replacing mature stands with new healthy stands of regrowth, while protecting and maintaining other resource values. The actions authorized under this decision will adhere to multiple-use management.

II. LEGAL AUTHORITY

The Department is taking this action under the authority of AS 38.05.035(e) (Best Interest Finding); AS 38.05.110-123; 11 AAC 71 (Timber Sale Statutes and Regulations); AS 41.17.010-.950 and 11 AAC 95 (Forest Resources and Practices Statutes and Regulations); AS 46.40; 11 AAC 110 (Alaska Coastal Management Statutes and Regulations).

III. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

Case file ADL 107304 constitutes the administrative record for this finding.

IV. DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

A. Physical characteristics of the sale area

1. Topography. The general topography of Gravina Island is gently rolling coastal plain with somewhat steeper interior slopes. This timber sale is located in the interior portion of the island. Road locations will be located on gentle to moderate slopes with units encompassing gentle, moderate and some steep slopes. Access to the sale area will be along slightly rolling ground from the east side (airport side) of Gravina Island into the Bostwick Lake drainage, and then above the flood plain of the Bostwick Creek drainage system. Elevations range between 300 and 800 feet.

2. Water bodies. *The Atlas to the Catalog of Waters Important for Spawning, Rearing, and Migration of Anadromous Fishes* was used to identify potential fish habitat issues in the timber sale area. The proposed logging road does not cross any catalogued streams and there are no catalogued streams within or adjacent to the harvest areas. There are two catalogued anadromous streams in the general area, however. Bostwick Creek, identified as Catalog Stream #101-27-10360, flows south from Bostwick Lake, and a catalogued tributary of Bostwick Creek is located to the southwest of the sale area.

There are no known uncatalogued anadromous streams in the project area, but staff from the Office of Habitat Management and Permitting (OHMP) have agreed to visit the site prior to harvesting, to field verify the presence or absence of anadromous streams in the proposed harvest units. A buffer consistent with the riparian standards in the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Regulations will be implemented on any anadromous water bodies found within the sale area. The following riparian standards [AS 41.17.118(a)(2)] apply to anadromous and high value resident fish streams in this area:

- (A) harvest of timber may not be undertaken within 100 feet immediately adjacent to an anadromous or high value resident fish water body;
- (B) between 100 and 300 feet from the water body, harvest of timber may occur but must be consistent with the maintenance of important fish and wildlife habitat as determined by the state forester with due deference to the deputy commissioner.

Additional riparian protection for Bostwick Creek was established in the Central/ Southern Southeast Area Plan, which calls for a no-harvest buffer of up to 500 feet on either side of the creek, and no less than 300 feet. (See also the Wildlife habitat section and the Fisheries and water quality section.) The timber sale complies with this buffer requirement.

3. Stand Conditions. The upland forest has an over-mature overstory composed primarily of western hemlock, Sitka spruce, western red cedar, and a minor component of Alaska yellow cedar. The area surrounding the timber sale area is old growth timber with scattered muskegs and scrub timber.

B. Current land use

There are no other permitted land uses in the timber sale area. No agricultural use or grazing is known to occur. The United States Forest Service is the major adjacent landowner. Timber harvesting has been planned on some of the USFS lands, but as of this date no Record of Decision

has been made as to whether or not to proceed with their sales. The only timber harvesting that has occurred in recent years has been on Mental Health Trust lands between the airport and the Pacific Log and Lumber sawmill north of the airport. This has primarily been selective harvest helicopter logging with two small clear cut units adjacent to the mill. At this point, there is no known adverse cumulative effect of timber harvesting related to the sale area.

C. Wildlife habitat

This sale was designed in consultation with the Office of Habitat Management and Permitting, using the guidelines and management intent of the Central/Southern Southeast Area Plan and the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act and Regulations. The CSEAP management intent language for Unit K-41 parcel states,

A buffer of up to 500 feet adjacent to and on either side of Bostwick Creek shall be provided if the FLUP planning process determines that this width is important for wildlife movement, continued community harvest, or riparian habitat protection. A minimum width of 300 feet along each side of the creek shall be provided.

Except for a small portion of the road between Unit 9 and Unit 10, the main logging road is also more than 500 feet from Bostwick Creek. That small portion of road (approximately 1400 feet) between Unit 9 and Unit 10 is outside of the 300 foot no-harvest buffer on Bostwick Creek and is logically situated at the toe of the slope, rather than on the steeper mid slope, to minimize the risk of erosion and sedimentation.

1. Mitigation efforts. The Bostwick #1 Timber Sale has been designed to minimize the impacts on wildlife habitat. Division of Forestry staff worked with the Office of Habitat Management and Permitting staff to design the sale and stream crossings, and ADF&G staff were involved in writing the guidelines in the area plan. The following mitigation efforts were undertaken as part of the design of the timber sale:

Location. The timber roads and harvest areas are more than two miles away from the nearest marine shoreline and sensitive estuarine areas. Timber roads will be closed following harvest operations.

Size and shape. The sale is relatively small, and retains a mix of stand ages and stand types in the parcel of state land that contains it. The total acreage for the tract of state land (K-41) is 4,975 acres, and the proposed harvest acreage for this sale is 495 acres, only ten percent of the total. The timber in this area is highly variable in size and type. This variability consequently produces a mottled harvest pattern. The irregular harvest pattern and the residual stands surrounding this area will provide cover and travel corridors for wildlife.

Stream and lake buffers. All of the timber harvest units in this proposed harvest are farther away than the maximum distance requested by the area plan from Bostwick Creek: 500 feet on each side of the stream. This buffer was designed to provide a wildlife movement corridor. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) endorses the guidelines designed to protect wildlife in the Bostwick #1 Timber Sale. The USFWS explains that, according to their *Small Old Growth Habitat Reserve Review: Gravina Project Area*, the headwaters of Bostwick Creek provide a corridor between the extensive wetlands and

estuarine resources that run along the Tongass Narrows and Blank Inlet, and the long central valley that runs southeasterly between the Vallenar and Bostwick estuaries on the north and south ends, respectively. Also, the Bostwick stream channel connects the Old Growth parcel on USFS land immediately adjacent to parcel K-41, with Bostwick estuary to the south and Old Growth Reserve and beach fringe to the west on Clarence Strait. In addition, all but 1400 feet of the forestry road is located farther from Bostwick Creek than the maximum requested distance for harvest units of 500 feet, and *all* of the road is located farther away than 300 feet. Although not required by the area plan or by statute, as much as terrain and physical conditions allow, most of the road is more than 300 feet from Bostwick Lake. Tree removal within the road corridor along the lake will be kept to a minimum, while still maintaining the OSHA requirements for safety.

Road closure. The forestry road will be closed at the end of timber harvest operations, as directed by the DNR Division of Mining, Land and Water.

Best management practices. The Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act and its Regulations will be followed to ensure protection of riparian standards and fish and wildlife habitat.

2. Potentially affected species. The following species were taken into consideration when planning this timber sale.

Eagles. Division of Forestry staff consulted both US Forest Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service eagle nest maps, and no eagle nests have been identified in the planning area. If any eagle nests are located before or during the timber harvest, the Division will notify USFWS of the location of the nest, mark the site, and establish a 330' buffer around the tree, as per 11 AAC 95.340.

Goshawks. According to the USFS EIS for their proposed Gravina Island timber sale, Between 1994 and 1999, the USFS completed 39 goshawk surveys on Gravina Island, and five positive identifications were made. Surveys in 2002 and 2003 did not detect any goshawks, and no goshawk nests have been identified on Gravina Island.

Sitka Black-tailed Deer. In 1992, the USFS developed an interagency model to evaluate winter habitat capability for deer. They used this model to determine the impacts of their proposed timber harvest on Gravina Island. The deer model showed that regardless of alternative (for harvests ranging from 803 acres to 2,218 acres), the USFS sale would change the deer habitat capability by approximately one percent for the first 25 years after harvest. During the stem exclusion phase, from 26 years on, the model showed the different USFS alternatives as resulting in a four to nine percent reduction in long-term habitat capability. The Bostwick #1 Timber Sale is smaller than even the smallest harvest alternative in the USFS proposed timber sale.

Also important to note is that the Forest Service model assumes that non-National Forest land ownerships have a zero habitat capability. That is, the model assumes that the state land is completely developed and has no habitat value for deer. Not only is the proposed state harvest smaller than any alternative proposed by the USFS, it only affects ten percent

of an otherwise undisturbed area of state land that was assumed by the model to have no habitat value.

Road access can impact deer populations by facilitating increases in hunting. According to the original USFS EIS for the US Forest Service Gravina Island timber sale, deer harvest would undoubtedly increase if a road system is constructed on Gravina Island. Increased human access would likely have a greater impact on deer numbers than would reductions in deer habitat capability resulting from timber harvest. Because the forestry road will be closed at the end of timber harvest operations, the roads will not provide long-term motorized access for hunters. Nonetheless, the roads would facilitate increased access that would likely result in an increased harvest of deer. Fortunately, these impacts of hunting can be controlled by ADF&G and the Board of Game, both by changing the lengths of hunting seasons and bag limits on deer, and permitted means and methods of harvest.

The hunter demand for deer on Gravina Island between 1992 and 2001 represented about eight percent of the current deer habitat capability. Based on projections of population increase (not including changes in access), hunter demand is expected to increase 18 percent over each of the first two decades and 15 percent over each of the following three decades. Regardless of timber harvest on the island, this demand could lead to unsustainable levels of deer harvest on Gravina Island unless ADF&G and the Board of Game adjusts their management strategies for hunting on the island. Changes could include shortening hunting season lengths, reducing harvest limits, and installing a hunter check station on Gravina Island. (USFS EIS)

Wolf. The USFS *Alexander Archipelago Wolf Conservation Assessment* identified three key issues that influence wolf populations in Southeast Alaska: 1) loss of long-term carrying capacity for deer due to timber harvesting, 2) high wolf mortality associated with increased human access from roads, and 3) continued high levels of wolf harvest by humans. The current deer habitat capability was estimated at 20 deer per square mile in the USFS timber harvest project area, and the recommended level of 18 deer per square mile is the minimum to support both wolves and the current hunter demand. Under no alternative (even the highest USFS alternative, over four times higher than the proposed state sale) would the proposed USFS timber sale reduce deer density below 18 deer per square mile.

Roads have been shown to increase human access and increase wolf mortality, and harvest of wolves increased twofold where road density exceeded 0.7 miles per square miles. Regardless of the alternative, road densities on Gravina Island would remain below 0.7 miles per square mile. With or without road construction or timber sales, human harvest has the potential to completely exterminate the wolves on Gravina Island. The average number of wolves in a pack on nearby islands averaged seven to nine wolves, and there is one known wolf pack on Gravina. Hunters may legally harvest five wolves per year, and there is no bag limit for trapping. Harvest records for Gravina Island suggest that in some years, hunters and trappers may harvest most of the pack. ADF&G and the Board of Game controls bag limits for hunting and trapping.

Endemics. No rare or endemic terrestrial mammal populations were identified in the USFS sale project area.

D. Fisheries and water quality

The timber harvest and associated road has been designed and located according to FRPA standards and best management practices to minimize impacts to fish streams.

1. Location. All of the timber harvest units in this proposed harvest are farther away than the maximum distance from Bostwick Creek requested by the Central/Southern Southeast Area Plan. No harvest will take place within 500 feet on each side of the stream. In addition, all but a 1400-foot length of the forestry road is located farther from Bostwick Creek than the maximum requested distance for timber harvest units (500 feet), and *all* of the road is located farther away than the 300 foot minimum requested for timber harvest units. Although not required by the area plan or by statute, as much as terrain and physical conditions allow, most of the road is more than 300 feet from Bostwick Lake. Tree removal within the road corridor along the lake will be kept to a minimum, while still maintaining OSHA requirements for safety.

2. Stream and lake buffers . In addition to providing the buffers along Bostwick Creek and Bostwick Lake, as described in the section above, the FRPA will be implemented to maintain bank and soil stability, and in turn, water quality. The State of Alaska Office of Habitat, Management and Permitting (OHMP) has agreed to assist the DOF in identifying anadromous streams and other areas of specific concerns that have not already been addressed in the initial layout. An inspection by OHMP will be scheduled and performed prior to road construction and harvest to identify any additional habitat issues which will be mitigated in accordance with Best Management Practices identified in the FRPA guidelines. Due deference will be given to OHMP in regard to habitat mitigation to ensure all fish, wildlife, and water quality issues are adequately addressed by the proposed timber sale design. Any anadromous streams that are identified adjacent to or within the sale units will be buffered by a minimum 100 foot “no cut” buffer and an additional special management zone from 100 feet to 300 feet on each side of the stream. Between 100 and 300 feet from the water body, harvest of timber may occur but must be consistent with the maintenance of important fish and wildlife habitat.

In addition, low value and non-merchantable timber will be left along the streams that are not identified as anadromous or high value resident fish streams. Due to the varied gradient of the streams and moderate topography of the sale area, any turbidity generated by the operations should settle out within the unit or adjacent to the sale area.

Information from field inspections, compliance monitoring, and the state ACWA (Alaska Clean Water Actions) database indicate that the FRPA is effective in protecting water quality. The annual report from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) on the effectiveness of FRPA concluded that, “when properly implemented, the BMPs are effective at protecting water quality.” No streams have been identified or listed for violation of water quality standards as a result of forest operations subject to the FRPA best management practices.

The Division of Forestry routinely monitors implementation of the best management practices (BMPs) established by the Alaska Forest Resources & Practices Act (FRPA) and regulations.

Compliance in Southeast Alaska is high – the overall score for compliance in 2003 and 2004 was 4.6 out of a possible score of 5.0 across a wide range of BMPs. When the Division identifies BMPs for which implementation is inadequate, we address the problems through operator training and enforcement actions.

No karst formations were discovered during the field work and no cave resources have been documented by the Forest Service on lands adjacent to this sale area. The DOF will protect karst formations that affect water quality through the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act and Regulations.

E. Subsistence

The Bostwick #1 Timber Sale has been designed to minimize impacts on subsistence, habitat values, and hunting in the area.

1. Location. The harvest units are located away from the areas with the highest amount of subsistence use—the shore and areas with boat access. According to ADF&G Division of Subsistence’s reports on resource use in Saxman and Metlakatla, most of the deer hunting occurs within a mile or two of the coastline. According to ADF&G’s *Subsistence resource use patterns in Southeast Alaska: Summaries of 30 communities, Saxman*, for deer hunting, the most heavily utilized areas of Gravina Island by Saxman residents are the coastline and muskeg regions. “Fewer households hunted more than two or three miles inland from shorelines or road systems.” and “Most residents preferred to hunt the coastline areas including beach fringe and muskeg.” The report for Metlakatla indicates that “the greatest number of households (15 to 25 percent) were shown to have used the shorelines of Annette Island and the shorelines of Bostwick Inlet on Gravina Island. Fewer households (10 to 15 percent) were shown to have used several inland areas both on Annette and on Gravina islands.” The nearest harvest unit is more than two miles from Bostwick Inlet and about five miles from the airport on Tongass Narrows. Also, all the harvest units and most of the road are more than 500 feet from Bostwick Creek, an anadromous stream. (See also the Wildlife habitat section.) There are no known roads or trails leading into or out of the sale area.

2. Stream buffers. No-cut buffers of 100 feet will be established on all anadromous and high value resident fish streams, including uncatalogued streams. According to the FRPA, an additional special management zone from 100 feet to 300 feet is established on each side of anadromous and high-value fish streams that allows harvest of trees only if it is consistent with the maintenance of important fish and wildlife habitat. The Office of Habitat Management & Permitting recommendations for stream buffers have been incorporated into the final sale design, and the Division of Forestry has planned future site visits with OHMP staff to verify the presence or absence of fish on uncatalogued streams in the project area.

3. Best Management Practices. The best management practices from the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act will be implemented fully on the timber sale, including standards for timber harvesting and for road location, construction, and maintenance. These standards apply to land around all surface waters, whether or not they contain fish.

4. Road access. According to the USFS EIS, roads and associated increases in access can

impact deer populations by facilitating increases in both legal harvest and illegal poaching (USDA Forest Service. 2004. *Gravina Island Timber Sale. Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision.*, p. 3-310). Gravina Island is an important hunting area for Ketchikan, Metlakatla, and Saxman deer hunters. Current access for hunting is via boat or airport ferry, and most hunting is done on foot. Access to most of Gravina Island is currently limited, and according to the USFS 2004 analysis, most hunting probably occurs within one mile of shoreline on the east side of the island, as well as in the vicinity of Blank and Bostwick Inlets and Vallenar Bay. Most areas in the interior and the west side of Gravina Island receive relatively little hunting pressure because they are less accessible. These areas may serve as refuge for some deer during the hunting season, and they may function as population sources for the more heavily hunted areas.

To mitigate the influence of these timber roads on deer populations, the forestry roads will be closed at the end of timber harvest operations, so that they will not be accessible to highway vehicles. If there are concerns about over-hunting of the deer population (See also the Wildlife habitat section), the ADF&G and Board of Game can regulate hunting by adjusting season lengths, bag limits, and means and methods of harvest. The USFS EIS indicated that threats from hunting outweigh the threats from loss of a relatively small percentage of deer habitat on Gravina Island.

F. Recreation

No known commercial recreation operations use this specific area. There is very limited personal recreation use in the sale area due to lack of local access at this time. The project area is more than two miles from the nearest shoreline (Bostwick Inlet), and cannot be easily accessed by water. The area of the timber sale is not known to have unique tourism values. Recreational activity on Gravina Island is tied closely to the existing transportation system (airport ferry), and saltwater. Even if Bostwick Lake were to receive more recreational use, the only visible part of the harvest activity would be a part of the road. The harvest units are not visible from the lake.

The Division of Forestry will close the timber harvest road at the end of harvest operations as per 11 AAC 95.320, as requested by the land manager, DNR's Division of Mining, Land, and Water (DMLW). According to DMLW, there has been no other application for a road easement for another purpose that this road could serve. If another agency would like to manage the road as open, an easement may be discussed with the Division of Mining, Land and Water.

Closing off the road does not mean State land is closed to the public. Generally allowed uses would still be allowed across State land, including hiking, backpacking, skiing, climbing, and other foot travel. Just vehicular travel would be precluded.

G. Scenic resources.

The harvest units will not be visible from Bostwick Lake, Ketchikan or the airport on Gravina Island, due to the surrounding elevation and the southern and eastern slope exposures of the sale units, and the location of the sale in the middle of Gravina Island. The timber sale units do not occur on the normal float plane routes or on typical jet landing and takeoff routes, but may be visible from planes servicing Ketchikan. The timber sale has been designed with irregular borders, rather than as

a rectangular block immediately visible from the air as a timber sale. Parts of the access road will be visible from Ketchikan and Bostwick Lake.

H. Cultural resources.

This timber sale was designed to avoid the areas on Gravina Island with the highest potential for cultural sites: areas along the shorelines and anadromous streams. Staff at the Office of History and Archaeology's State Historic and Preservation Office (SHPO) reviewed this proposed sale area in our most recent Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales, and received the draft Forest Land Use Plan. They made no comments regarding any evidence of cultural or historic features in the sale area. If cultural or paleontological resources are discovered during the course of activities associated with this timber sale, the site shall be protected from any disturbance, and SHPO will be contacted immediately to ensure compliance with State laws governing cultural resources.

Under the Alaska Historic Preservation Act (41.35.200), all burials on State land are protected. If burials or human remains are found, all land-altering activities that would disturb the burial or remains shall cease and measures will be taken to protect it in place. The State Historic and Preservation Office and a law enforcement officer will be notified immediately to ensure that proper procedures for dealing with human remains are followed.

I. Sustained yield and allowable cut

The Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (AS 41.17.060 (c)) and Article VIII Sec. 4 of the State Constitution require that State forest land be managed on a sustained yield basis. Sustained yield is defined in the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (AS 41.17.950(15)):

"Sustained Yield" means the achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high level of annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of forest land and water without significant impairment of the productivity of the land and water, but does not require that timber be harvested in a non-declining yield basis over a rotation period.

The annual allowable cut for the Southern Southeast Area is set at 12,818 MBF. The allowable cut is managed on a decadal basis – that means that the Southern Southeast Area can harvest up to 128.18 MBF over 10 years. The amount harvested each year can vary as long as the total over 10 years stays within this limit. From FY96 through FY04, Southern Southeast timber sales were significantly less than the allowable cut. That allows DOF to increase sales to provide more timber to local mills for a few years, while staying within the allowable cut.

J. Regeneration

The clear-cut harvest areas in southern Southeast Alaska have satisfactorily regenerated by natural seed and meet or exceed the FRPA reforestation standard for coastal forests, which is 200 seedlings per acre 11AAC95.375(d)(1). Natural regeneration from adjacent seed source has been the preferred regeneration method. There appears to be adequate old growth in the area for this method of regeneration. Regeneration in Southeast Alaska averages six to eight inches of height growth for each of the first five years following harvest and subsequent to year five grows at a rate of approximately one foot to two feet per year. It is anticipated that regeneration after logging will exceed reforestation standards, which must be met or exceeded within seven years after the sale.

K. Harvest methods

The silvicultural prescription includes clear-cutting and yarding with a log shovel and a small high lead tower. Both logging methods will provide sufficient soil disturbance to make a good seed bed for natural regeneration.

L. Transportation

Main access to this timber sale will utilize the road system currently being developed by the Mental Health Land Trust, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, and Pacific Log and Lumber (PLL). (See timber sale area map (North) for location of proposed ADOT road.) Approximately 9.1 miles of rocked, single lane road with turnouts will be constructed as part of the proposed timber sale. Logs will be transported by road to the Pacific Log and Lumber sawmill north of the airport on Gravina Island, and then manufactured into high value-added and value-added forest products. The Division of Forestry will close the timber harvest road at the end of harvest operations as per 11 AAC 95.320, as requested by the land manager, DNR's Division of Mining, Land, and Water (DMLW).

M. Erosion

There are two soil erosion concerns: surface erosion and mass wasting of soil and debris. Road construction and poor maintenance of roads primarily causes surface erosion. For the Bostwick #1 Sale, the amount of road construction has been minimized, and none of the roads are on steep slopes. The roads have been designed to follow the natural contours and benches in the area and are located on flat or moderate slopes of less than 25 percent. The roads were kept off steeper slopes and located on flat benches to not only minimize soil erosion from road construction, but also to minimize erosion due to cable logging. We will require full or partial suspension for any cable logging that occurs in these harvest units. The location of the road will give better lift and deflection and will provide flatter landing areas. The boundaries of Unit 10 were not only designed to minimize blowdown, but to also ensure that proper lift will be allowed along the back line.

The FRPA regulation slope stability standards and cable yarding BMPs will be adhered to at all times, as well as the BMPs for road construction, including installing relief culverts, ditch lines, outcropping of the road when required, and proper sizing of culverts at small stream crossings. The Forest Resources and Practices Act and Regulations will be implemented to protect the current hydrologic pattern. This will include, but not be limited to, proper culvert sizing, relief culverts discharging on stable soils, vegetative or other stabilization of exposed soils, and proper road maintenance. Our timber sale forester will ensure, with frequent field inspections, compliance with the timber sale contract and the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act and Regulations. Proper road maintenance on active, inactive, and closed roads will be followed. Finally, all roads will be closed out at the end of harvest operations as directed by the Division of Mining, Land and Water.

The other aspect of erosion (mass wasting and debris avalanches) normally occurs on slopes of more than 70 percent. The *Central/Southern Southeast Area Plan* states that "Forest management activities may not be conducted on slopes consistently greater than 67 percent, on an unstable slope, or in a slide-prone area unless approved in a FLUP. The DOF has determined that the mass wasting potential is minimal because slopes are generally mild and timber harvest areas are not on slopes consistently greater than 67 percent.

On significant slopes greater than 30 percent, DNR requires cable yarding of logs to minimize ground disturbance. Harvesting may be suspended during periods of saturated soil conditions to assure there is minimal soil disturbance.

N. Mining

There is little known current mining activity in this area. Other than providing increased access, this sale will have no impact on the mining resources or mining activity in this area.

O. Materials

The main rock source for construction will come from developing rock quarries within the sale area and near the proposed road. Additional rock sources may be acquired from within the road right-of-way, which will lessen the requirement for large pit development. All decisions for quarry development will be made by the timber purchaser with the DOF's approval and be based on Best Management Practices in FRPA [11 AAC 95.290 and 95.325]. Due to the topography and the quantity of rock needed, pit development will not be readily visible from salt water or be a dominant part of the topography.

P. Economics

This sale is being sold under AS 38.05.123 and will require that the timber be locally manufactured into value-added and high value-added wood products. A sale sold under AS 38.05.123 requires the secondary manufacture of value-added wood products to produce high value-added wood products. The listed high value-added wood products are:

Interior finish paneling, trim molding, flooring, doors, windows, cabinet stock, furniture, musical instruments or parts of instruments, toys, tools and implements, ready to assemble building kits, veneer, plywood, finger-jointed lumber, faced house logs, dissolving pulp, engineered wood products, kiln-dried lumber, shakes and shingles, laminated veneer lumber, and other similar finished wood products as determined by the Commissioner to have received processing beyond sawing and planing that adds high value to the wood product.

The purpose of an AS 38.05.123 sale is to provide additional employment benefits to local communities and promote the development of a stable local economy through local manufacture of high value-added wood products. Pacific Log and Lumber has an operational dry kiln and planer that is capable of producing 125,000 board feet (BF) of high value-added wood products per month.

This proposed sale will create economic benefits within the community of Ketchikan and other areas of southern Southeast Alaska. The business communities will receive direct economic benefits by providing support services for the operators such as fuel, food, housing, medical and miscellaneous supplies. The residents of the communities in southern Southeast Alaska will receive a direct benefit through employment opportunities and wages paid by the operator during the course of the timber harvest and milling operations. Pacific Log and Lumber employs 70 people in their timber harvest and mill operations, with an annual payroll estimated at \$2,400,000. The timber from this sale would supply approximately one year of mill production.

V. MARKET CONDITIONS

Timber demand in Southeast Alaska varies dramatically on an annual basis. The level of demand is difficult to predict with precision. Various factors influence the demand for Southeast Alaska timber, including interest rates, housing, value of the dollar with respect to changes in import tariffs, export policies locally and abroad, business cycles in the United States and overseas, installed mill capacity, regional and world timber markets, and timber availability and cost. The timber industry in the past has been dependent on the USFS land base for its timber supply, but recent federal land management policies and uncertainties have made their fiber supplies to the local mills erratic. Demand for alternative timber supplies, including State timber, has increased dramatically. Timber manufacturers in Southeast Alaska are in a state of transition to a strictly independent market. Various entrepreneurs are testing markets and trying new manufacturing techniques.

To help stabilize the local wood products industry, the DOF has been directed by the Governor and Legislature to make a consistent and sustainable timber supply available to the local markets. The Southern Southeast Area has sold all timber sales that have been prepared in the past four years, which is evidence that the supply has not exceeded demand.

VI. ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

There are five possible alternatives to consider for this sale. A discussion of each of the five alternatives follows:

1. To continue the sales as proposed.

This alternative meets the objectives of the Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales and DNR's constitutional mandate. It also meets the silvicultural objective of improving forest vigor, provides for high value-added end products and creates additional jobs in the local community due to the combination of road building, logging, and trucking. Additional employment is associated with saw milling and the processing of value added and high value added wood products.

2. To modify the sales by making them smaller or larger.

This sale consists of nine units. The units are a logical series of settings for typical equipment of the region and will provide the purchaser with enough capital return to construct the infrastructure needed to access the unit. The sizes of the units are designed to be large enough to be economically viable for cable and shovel logging methods. Increasing or decreasing the size of the unit would increase logging costs or leave timber that would be more difficult to harvest in the future. This sale is of an adequate size to cover the costs to construct the new road and cover the mobilization costs to operate on the Gravina Island road system. Sales of this size are appropriately balanced to maintain other resource values as well as provide economic benefits to southern Southeast Alaska.

3. Defer the sale to a later date.

Deferring harvest to a later date would fail to meet many of the objectives of the sale. One of the main objectives is to make State-owned timber consistently available to the timber industry in light of federal timber supply uncertainties.

4. Not offer this sale.

This alternative would result in not meeting any of the objectives outlined for this management action. Utilization of the forest resource would not be achieved. There would be no significant contribution to the State and local economies.

5. Offer this sale on a competitive basis.

This alternative would result in utilization of the forest resource and provide the most revenue to the State's general fund. However, this alternative would not likely result in local manufacture or the development of high value-added wood products, nor would it provide as much economic boost for the communities in southern Southeast Alaska. Competitive bid timber typically is sold on the export market. State law allows the DOF to require domestic processing of the timber, but only under a negotiated process.

VII. ACMP CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

A. Comments and consultation

The review participants, as defined in AS 46.40.096, submitted comments concerning the proposed ACMP Consistency Statement. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Office of Habitat Management and Permitting (OHMP) reviewed the timber sale documents and recommended the sale be found consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program without stipulations beyond the Best Management Practices of the FRPA. The manager of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough (the reviewing authority for the Ketchikan Coastal District) commented on the FLUP but made no statement of consistency agreement or disagreement.

The Organized Village of Saxman challenged the proposed consistency statement of the DOF on the grounds that they believe the proposed sale will significantly impact and alter their way of life and subsistence values. They assert that the sale will affect the subsistence resources directly through the loss of habitat and also indirectly due to the ease of access to the area that will in turn allow for added competition for subsistence resources. Although Saxman is not a review participant as defined in AS 46.40.096, DOF considered their comments before making the Proposed Consistency Determination.

DOF consulted with OHMP and ADF&G on the effect of the proposed sale's configuration on the fish and wildlife resources of the sale area. US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game data were also reviewed to understand the resources on Gravina Island.

B. Fish habitat issues

OHMP requested verification of all potential fish habitat in the sale area prior to selling the timber. DOF and OHMP have agreed to work together to verify all fish habitat in the sale area prior to harvesting. The Division included OHMP in the sale design process and field work, and will continue to work with OHMP in the field to review waterbodies prior to harvest. The final finding for the proposed sale incorporates mitigation actions that reflect FRPA standards and Central/Southern Southeast Area Plan guidelines for protection of fisheries. Based on this collaboration, the DOF believes that the fisheries of the area will be adequately protected from significant harm.

C. Wildlife habitat and subsistence

OHMP also commented on behalf of ADF&G with regard to wildlife concerns in the area of the sale. OHMP did not comment on the timber sale's effect on long-term habitat capacity for wildlife, but focused instead on the effects of roads on increased deer hunting activity. According to the USFS EIS, the effects of increased hunting access on the deer population far outweighed the decline (from four to nine percent) in long-term carrying capacity by even the USFS's largest proposed sale in the area. OHMP focused their comments on the effect that access will have on the deer available for harvest by the nearby communities and specifically subsistence users that are federally recognized under ANILCA. OHMP postulated that a high probability of over-harvest of deer could occur on Gravina Island with the improved access created by the logging roads associated with the sale.

The USFS also developed projections for deer population depletion in their Environmental Impact Statement for their proposed Gravina Island Timber Sale. The EIS projected that without changes in hunting management, over-harvest will occur within the next 20 years, regardless of the activity that takes place on federal or other lands due to the projected population growth of Ketchikan. DNR will mitigate impacts on harvest by closing the access road upon completion of harvesting operations. DOF will close the road to all vehicle traffic, using the road closure standards in the FRPA regulations (see Transportation section).

The community of Ketchikan (the Borough) is not recognized as a designated federal subsistence community. The timber sale area is not designated as a subsistence area under the current Ketchikan Coastal Management Plan (KCMP) (11 AAC 114.250(g)). Subsistence concerns have been addressed by the DOF through sale design and proposed management actions in the sale area (e.g., sale size and location, stream buffers, road location and closure, wildlife corridor along Bostwick Creek. For more information, see the Subsistence and Wildlife habitat sections). The sale is consistent with the FRPA which establishes the ACMP habitat standards for forest operations, and with the Central/Southern Southeast Area Plan. Furthermore, ADF&G will allocate the harvestable deer on federal land based on federal subsistence priorities outlined in ANILCA if there are not enough deer to provide for all users.

D. Coastal Consistency Determination

Under 11 AAC 112.270 the DOF has determined that it has minimized and mitigated the impacts to fish and wildlife habitat and subsistence in relation to the overall needs of the State to use the area to benefit the community of Ketchikan and the State.

There are no known geophysical hazards or areas of historic or archaeological importance within the proposed sale area. Recreational and subsistence use of the area is thought to be relatively low due to the isolation of the actual sale area; no seafood processing is designated to occur in this area; there is no grazing or agriculture use of the area. Therefore, the sale does not conflict with the standards on geophysical hazards; historic, prehistoric and archaeological resources; fish and seafood processing; subsistence and recreation; or agricultural use. Offering and administering the sale consistent with the FRPA will satisfy the habitat standards because the Forest Practices Regulations preempt the habitat standards enacted under AS 46.40. In addition, the sale does not cause an impediment to existing or future transportation or utility corridors, and is therefore

consistent with that standard. Laws and regulations regarding timber harvesting and the quality of air, land and water will apply, ensuring consistency. The sale is also consistent with enforceable policies in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Coastal Management Plan.

The consensus of the review participants is that the proposed Bostwick #1 timber sale is consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management. Based upon this consensus, the standards of the ACMP and Ketchikan Gateway Borough Coastal Management Program, and the actions taken to mitigate impacts in the Forest Land Use Plan for the proposed sale, DOF determines that the Bostwick #1 timber sale is consistent with the ACMP.

VIII. OBJECTIONS, COMMENTS, AND ALTERNATIVES RECEIVED

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Office of Habitat Management and Permitting (OHMP) reviewed the timber sale documents and recommended that the sale be found consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) without stipulations. The Ketchikan Gateway Borough, the other review participant in the coastal consistency process, commented on the FLUP but made no statement of consistency agreement or disagreement. The Organized Village of Saxman did challenge the consistency statement, but did not identify an enforceable ACMP policy relating to their comments. Because Saxman is not a “review participant” under 11 AAC 110.990 (41), their comment alone does not register as a recommended finding of inconsistency. However, DOF considered their comment in making the Proposed Consistency Determination.

Nineteen comments were received from the public regarding the Preliminary Decision that the timber sale is in the State’s best interest. Seven comments were in favor of the timber sale, four comments had specific comments and recommendations about the sale, and eight were opposed to the sale. Included with this final finding is a summary of agency and public comments received and DOF’s response to those comments.

IX. FINAL FINDING, DECISION, AND ACMP CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION

A. Alaska Coastal Management Program Consistency Determination

This Final Finding also contains the DOF’s ACMP consistency analysis. The DOF believes this action is consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program. The requirements of applicable statutes and regulations have been satisfied. This proposed consistency determination may be elevated by a State resource agency or the affected coastal district (Ketchikan Gateway Borough), as noted in AS 46.40.096. The consistency statement may be elevated (11 AAC 110.600) to the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources on or before May 16, 2005.

B. Best Interest Decision

The purpose of this decision is to determine if the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, will make available timber located in Sections 21, 28 and 33, T75S, R90E and Sections 4, 5, 6, and 8, T76S, R90E, Copper River Meridian. After due consideration of all pertinent information and alternatives, the DNR has reached the following **Final Decision: To offer the sale as proposed in Alternative 1**. The DOF finds that this final decision satisfies the objectives as stated in this document and it is in the best interest of the State to proceed with this action under its authority of AS 38.05.035(e) & AS 38.05.123.

A Person affected by this Best Interest Decision who provided timely written comment may request reconsideration in accordance with 11 AAC 02. Any appeal must be received by May 31, 2005 and must be mailed or delivered to Tom Irwin, Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources, 550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1400, Anchorage, Alaska 99501; or faxed to (907) 269-8918, or sent by electronic mail to dnr_appeals@dnr.state.ak.us. If reconsideration is not requested by May 31, 2005, or if the commissioner does not order reconsideration on his own motion, this decision goes into effect as a final order and decision on June 1, 2005.

Failure of the commissioner to act on a request for reconsideration within 30 days after issuance of this decision is a denial of reconsideration and is a final administrative order and decision for purposes of an appeal to Superior Court. The decision may then be appealed to Superior Court within a further 30 days in accordance with the rules of the court, and to the extent permitted by applicable law. An eligible person must first request reconsideration of this decision in accordance with 11 AAC 02 before appealing this decision to Superior Court. A copy of 11 AAC 02 may be obtained from any regional information office of the Department of Natural Resources

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Curran of the Southern Southeast Area Office at (907) 225-3070 or e-mail Michael_Curran@dnr.state.ak.us.

Tom Irwin
Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources

Date

Map 1

Map 2

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STATUTES AND REGULATIONS

AS 38.04.065	Land use planning and classification
AS 38.04.910 (5)	Definitions – Multiple use
AS 38.05.035	Powers and duties of the director [includes best interest findings]
AS 38.05.112	Forest Land Use Plan
AS 38.05.113	Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales
AS 38.05.123	Negotiated timber sales for local manufacture of wood products
AS 38.05.945	Public notice
AS 41.17	Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act
AS 46.40	The Alaska Coastal Management Program
6 AAC 80	Standards of the Alaska Coastal Management Program
11 AAC 71	Timber and material sales
11 AAC 95	Forest resources and practices regulations
11 AAC 110	Alaska Coastal Management Program Implementation
11 AAC 114	District Coastal Management Plan Requirements
33 CFR 323.4(a)(1),(6)	Permits for discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. (Discharges not requiring permits)

PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

We have communicated with many individuals throughout the entire planning process for the Bostwick #1 timber sale, many of them on numerous occasions.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency/Organization</u>	<u>Subject</u>
Mark Minnillo	OHMP Craig	Fish & wildlife habitat
Doug Campbell	Mental Health Trust	Adjacent land manager, timberharvest
Jim Anderson	DMLW	Road closure
Ed Collazzi	DMLW	Land mgmt, road closure
Steve Reeves	KGB planner	Recreation
Roy Eckert	KGB manager	Adjacent land manager, access, recreation
Steve Seley	Pacific Log & Lumber	High value added products, payroll
Bob Girt	Higher Ground Pursuit	Road engineer, road design
Dave Fletcher	USFS Tongass office	Timber sale unit design, planning
Jack Oien	USFS Tongass office	Road engineer, road design, timing
Jim Rhodes	USFS Tongass Office	Field engineer, road layout, traverse
Ken Vaughn	USFS Region 10	Roads manager, road layout, timing
Forrest Cole	USFS Tongass NF	Supervisor, document timing
Steve Brink	USFS Region 10	Deputy Dir, document timing
Jerry Ingersol	USFS KTN RD	District Ranger, sale planning
Susan Marthalis	USFS KTN RD	Timber sale planner, harvest units, roads
Rob Reeck	USFS KTN RD	Timber sale director, harvest units, plans
Sheila Spores	USFS KTN RD	Silviculturalist, unit layout, regen
Sandy Powers	USFS KTN RD	Documents
Joe Donahue	OPMP	ACMP procedures
Kim Kruse	ADNR ACMP Proj. Mgr.	ACMP procedures
Mike Turek	ADF&G Subsistence Div.	Subsistence Resource Specialist
Joan Dale	ADNR Off. of Hist. & Cultural Resources	
	Archaeology	
Kim Hasting	USFWS Petersburg	Spotted frog